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15	Editorial view
16	Overview The 25th anniversary of the Berlin Wall coming down; memorial mania; Focus E15; gentrification of Johannesburg; Lina Bo Bardi's legacy; David Mackay of MBM remembered
29	View from Rome
31	Viewpoints Lesley Lokko
32	Your views
35	AR Awards for Emerging Architecture
38	Winner: Boundary Window, Tokyo, Japan Shingo Masuda + Katsuhisa Otsubo Architects
48	Joint runner up: CHROFI Lune de Sang Sheds, Queensland, Australia
54	Joint runner up: CC Arquitectos Equestrian complex, Valle de Bravo, Mexico
60	Joint runner up: Atelier Deshaus Long Museum, Shanghai, China
64	Highly Commended Void Temple, Jalisco, Mexico; Farming Kindergarten, Dongnai, Vietnam; Fish Market Redevelopment, Buenos Aires, Argentina; Wind Tower, Lincolnshire, England; Wintergarden Facade, Brisbane, Australia; Nursery, Tōhoku, Japan; School Floating in the Sky, Kanchanaburi, Thailand
91	Reviews The Way Inn; current Japanese architecture; Nick Hedges' photographs; Extrastatecraft; Frank Gehry
98	History British architecture after the First World War
102	Reputations Louis Kahn
106	Folio German Bestelmeyer

'Perhaps the greatest act of remembrance we could perform this year would be to obliterate the Haig memorial – and refrain from building any new ones'
Tom Wilkinson, p18

'With the Gehry story everyone knows the ending, and once the climax of Bilbao has been reached, all that follows seems like the crashing and banging of an extended brassy finale'
Andrew Ayers, p91

'Silence becomes a form of rhetoric, above all in Edwin Lutyens' Cenotaph of 1919, which a character in John Galsworthy's *Forsyte Saga* described as a "monument to the dread of swank"'
Alan Powers, p98

'Even Stanislaus von Moos found Kahn irritating, and Rem Koolhaas crawled out of a lecture on his knees'
Paul Davies, p102



1. (Left) the lushly forested mountain range of Jalisco provides the setting for this final waypoint in a 117km pilgrimage route
 2. (Overleaf) the virginal white concrete ring represents a never-ending cycle, emblematic of faith



site plan

HIGHLY COMMENDED
ROZANA MONTIEL ARCHITECTS
VOID TEMPLE

The historic notion of religious pilgrimage is reconceptualised in Mexico's Ruta del Peregrino, a project that furnishes an array of nine contemporary structures, shelters, chapels and lookout points along the 117-kilometre route from the town of Ameca to the church in Talpa de Allende. Participants in the programme include Ai Weiwei, Tatiana Bilbao, Christ & Gantenbein and Mexican architect Rozana Montiel whose project the Void Temple is shown here.

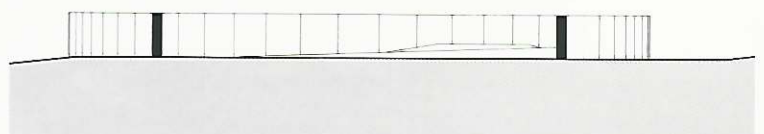
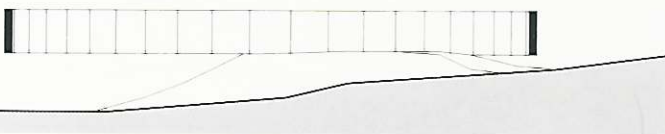
Since it first played host to an apparition of the Virgin in the 17th century, the church at Talpa – a small silver-mining town – has been an object of sustained and enthusiastic pilgrimage.

Around two million people participate each year in this penitential test of faith, coming from all over Mexico to trek through the mountain range of Jalisco. The route can be navigated in three days and conditions are harsh but such austerity is seen as an essential part of the pilgrimage ritual.

Exploring a language of simplicity and sobriety, the new structures are a conscious antidote to the wilder excesses of Mexican Catholicism. The Void Temple marks the route's final waypoint. A white concrete wall encloses a circular swathe of forest 40m in diameter. At times touching the ground, at times supported on pilotis, the wall

tactfully threads its way through trees, leaving the landscape undisturbed. A 3m-high gap under one side lets visitors in and out of the circle. 'As a universal symbol of unity, the circle transcends cultures, borders and languages,' says Montiel. 'It appears time and time again within religious rituals and depictions, from the halo of holy figures to the shape of the Holy Spirit during communion.' It also represents a cycle, a never-ending journey emblematic of the pilgrims' faith. The Void Temple creates a place for introspection, for pilgrims to reflect on their physical and spiritual journey before carrying on to their ultimate destination.

Architect
 Rozana Montiel Architects
Photographs
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sections



